

Kenmore Portal Site

Pre-Master Plan Site Assessment Prepared for the City of Kenmore

This report is a pre-master plan assessment of the Kenmore Portal Site and its qualities, opportunities and restraints for recreation value as a potential new park for the City of Kenmore. This assessment is based on materials provided by the City, consultation with Kenmore's reviewing wetland ecologist for the project (OTAK) and our observations in visiting the site.

It is important to note that this is a conceptual analysis with limited detail of the park and is NOT a master plan document. A master plan would be the next logical step for the portal site if a park is to be pursued at this location. This document is intended to assess feasibility of a park and what type of components it might include.

Natural and built features: In reviewing the site, its natural and built features shape what uses are appropriate for the site and where program elements can be placed. The site inventory and analysis, Exhibit A, included with this assessment, is a companion to the points addressed below.

Wetlands: The dominant natural characteristics shaping future use of this site is its moderate to steep slopes and its existing and enhanced/created wetlands. The existing wetlands, both at the top (east property line) and toe (west property line) of the site, provide quality habitat for wildlife; the opportunity for environmental education for visitors and the adjacent school; and the forests on-site provide a valued aesthetic to the increasingly dense neighborhood that surrounds the site. In addition to the physical characteristics of the wetlands, the associated permitting issues reflect a complicated issue that can impact schedules and have significant cost implications. The wetlands on site have been fully delineated and in the process of portal construction they have been impacted with a permitted wetland mitigation plan that, in addition to mitigating on-site impacts, the permitted project may be used to mitigate off-site wetland impacts as well. Any changes to the permitted wetland plan or impacts to other wetlands on-site will involve complex, costly, and time consuming permit processes with state and federal agencies. Should any proposed changes to the permitted wetland status be pursued, it is unlikely that they will be approved even with wetland compensation (which would likely have to be off-site) as the permitting would require an alternative analysis to show why proposed features could not be constructed on other sites without wetland impacts. Our inventory and analysis plan shows the limits of these wetlands and associated buffers, which for the purposes of this site assessment, we are accepting as a given. There are some passive activities that can occur



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within the wetlands and buffers such as trails, benches and interpretive signage that would be an asset to the park if constructed.

Slopes: The western third of the site is primarily flat (wetland) and the eastern half of the site is wooded with steep to moderate slopes. The eastern slopes contain the remnants of an old logging road, which could serve as a trail route to the eastern park boundary without significant grading, impact, or cost to the project. Between these areas lies a relatively level shelf that is ideal for built, active park elements. With the opportunity for the City of Kenmore to work with Metro KC in the restoration and regrading of the site at the end of their project, this shelf could have cross slopes of less than 2%. The shelf could potentially be widened with the use of retaining walls to cut into portions of the hill to the east, however, the walls would quickly become an expensive site component as they grow in height and could dewater upland wetlands, potentially requiring permitting and mitigation as addressed above.

Streams: Two streams run from the eastern property edge down the slope to the wetlands on the western edge and have surrounding stream buffers. They are currently piped from the top of the construction site to the wetland (under the level shelf described above). This piping can remain, obscuring the streams, but day lighting these streams and integrating them into the design of a potential park presents a great aesthetic amenity. On the eastern portion of the site, the streams are surrounded by steep slopes, providing quality habitat and a visual amenity to the park, but limiting the access. However, the existing logging road includes a culvert crossing of the southern creek that allows access and a place to route a trail over the stream.

The Portal Property: The Portal access and odor control complex on the site's northern boundary will remain as King County property, with the exact limits of fencing and landscaping to be determined. However, it seems reasonable to assume that the northern access point will be exclusively for use by Metro KC.

Park Access: Potential park access could be provided along both the east and west property lines. Western access could include a pedestrian access point through the wetlands and buffers from mid-block as well as a vehicular and pedestrian entrance from the southwest corner of the site along the existing construction access road. These entries could be marked as some sort of gateway to draw visitors into the park, and could be integrated into roadway and sidewalk improvements that could line 80th Ave. NE along the edge of the park. The eastern



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property could also contain an entrance and gateway from the adjacent school property, requiring access coordination with the North Shore School District. The incorporation of an eastern entry would make the park more accessible to a larger neighborhood to the east as well as draw more people through the park between the eastern and western neighborhoods, including kids walking to school and residents accessing the school's athletic fields.

Parking: Parallel parking could be provided on part or all of adjacent 80th Ave NE as part of roadway and sidewalk improvements adjacent to the site. In addition to on street parking, a small on-site parking lot could be provided along the southern boundary, accessed by the existing construction road and providing close access to built park elements on the "shelf". In addition to providing parking, this would provide maintenance and emergency services access to the heart of the park area for improved safety, security, and operation.

Potential Park Uses: In reviewing potential park uses, it is clear that this site is a unique piece of property that could be a great park, most likely as a neighborhood park, with a predominately passive character. The park drawing, included as Exhibit B with this report, reflects the following park uses as a starting point of what might be a good fit for the park:

- Playground (for 1-5 years and 6-12 years)
- "Environmental" play area for "kids" of all ages
- Picnic shelter for group events (rentable)
- Individual picnic tables
- Trails with interpretive/educational signage
- Climbing "cove" for kids of all ages
- Half court basketball
- Skate park
- Informal play meadow
- Passive elements/activities on the east hillside
- Art opportunities
- Tennis courts – 1-2 courts might fit, possibly at the north end of the park, adjacent to the Metro KC facility. This would take a significant footprint,

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reducing the size of the play meadow. (See Exhibit C for tennis court template.)

In addition to the above program, the following items were not considered optimal fits for this park site as noted below:

- Sports fields – While the site was studied as a site for one or more sports fields, they were not considered a good fit due to the limited usable flat space on site. The smallest field (little league) would not fit on the existing shelf. If retaining walls were to be constructed to increase adequate areas for fields it was determined that the costs of the walls, the impact to on-site hydrology (potentially dewatering uphill wetlands and requiring a permit), and the existing wetland and stream buffers (requiring permitting and mitigation), would make this an expensive solution, which may not be approved by the permitting agencies. Ideally, little league fields are clustered in parks with two or more fields that lend themselves to multiple games, making the parks an athletic destination. We have attached field templates (Exhibit C) at the same scale as Exhibits A and B for comparison.

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Maintenance and safety: As with any park, the portal site would require regular maintenance, both as traditional park maintenance for those more developed areas and as less intensive vegetation management for portions of the site that are to remain as wetlands and upland forest. The location of the level shelf where the majority of program elements would be built is removed from street activity which can be a benefit in buffering the park from noise and traffic. However, the more remote location can also result in real or perceived safety issues in the park. The inclusion of the access road and parking into the shelf area allows easy access for monitoring and maintenance of the site at all times.

Schedule: While there is not a firm timetable to proceed with the park design and Metro KC will continue to occupy the site for several more years, there may be a benefit to accelerating at least a portion of design if the park is to be pursued. Metro KC has significantly altered the site for construction staging and will be restoring the site as required by permitting agencies upon the completion of their work. While some specifics of the restoration have been determined as part of the permitting process, there is some flexibility on how some components are to be restored, notably the grading of the site. Metro KC should be developing final restoration plans in 2008 and they are supposed to coordinate with the City on



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those plans to accommodate the City's future use of the site where possible. By working with Metro KC to finalize grading to accommodate the future park prior to the construction and planting of new wetlands and buffers, there is an opportunity to create usable space in the park and save significantly on construction costs that would be otherwise born by the City during park construction. It is our recommendation that a firm schedule be established based on Metro KC's current design construction schedule and that the park's design, if pursued, be developed to a level to maximize work Metro KC will complete as part of their required restoration. Our recommended schedule is as follows:

- Spring 2007 – Determine Metro KC's schedule for finalizing site restoration plans (tentatively to be completed in 2008).
- Summer 2007 – Proceed with Portal Site master plan. Confirm and get specifics of Metro KC's restoration parameters to make sure the master plan adheres to those parameters.
- Fall 2007- Winter 2008 – Finalize the master plan with an emphasis on coordinating site restoration concepts completed by Metro KC, for inclusion by Metro KC in their site restoration drawings.
- 2009 and beyond – Determine the future schedule for the park. Possibly delay full construction documents until Metro KC is within one year of completing their work on the site. Identify park bidding and construction schedule, with some portions of work possibly bid to be completed immediately following Metro KC's restoration of the site.

Final site assessment: The site has great recreation potential as a neighborhood park with more of a passive character. Significant park program elements can be added to the site, particularly on the level "shelf" on the lower half of the site. The park also could be particularly valuable both for Kenmore residents and as urban wildlife habitat as Kenmore's density continues to increase and the surrounding neighborhoods grow. Kenmore already benefits from significant wetland habitat park spaces, notably Wallace Swamp Creek Park along Swamp Creek and Swamp Creek Park along the Sammamish River, and Lake Washington, but this site is unique in that it offers wetland habitat and upland habitat as well. When viewed as part of the larger Kenmore Parks system, the park would be a valued addition to the city's northeast quadrant, which is less served by parks than other areas of the city. It can also be a valued "link" in the city's parks system with reasonable proximity to Wallace Swamp Creek Park, and even the Sammamish River trail to the south.



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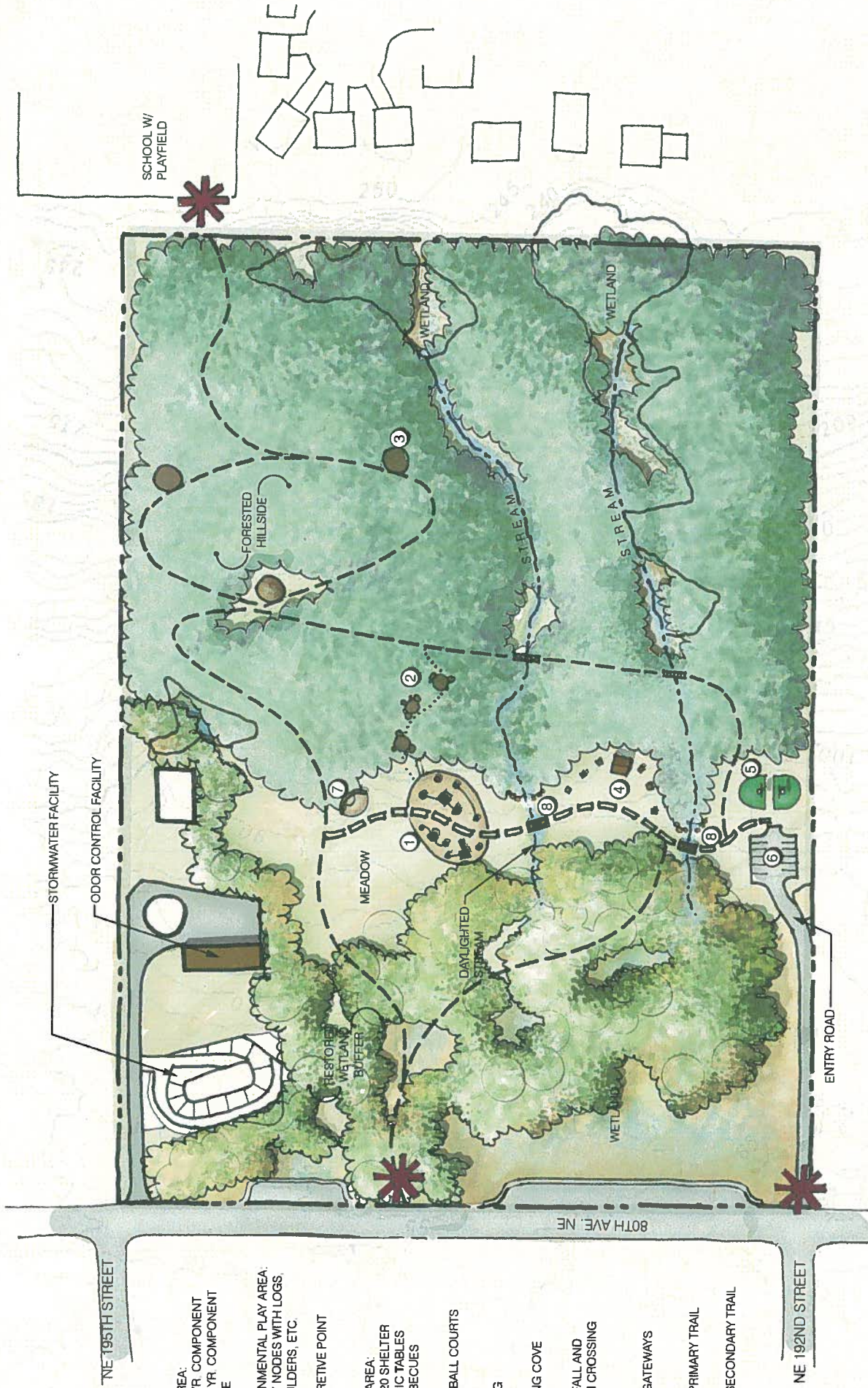
References: Notable background materials used in the preparation of this report include:

- North Kenmore Wetland and Buffer Planting Plan, South Area Detail, September 2005, Adolfson Associates, Inc.
- North Kenmore Site, Final Site Plan, January 2006, Civil Tech Engineering.
- Site Topography Map.

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End of Report

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PORTAL PARK - PRE-MASTER PLAN SITE ASSESSMENT EXHIBIT B: PARK OPPORTUNITIES FEBRUARY 12, 2007



① TENNIS COURT

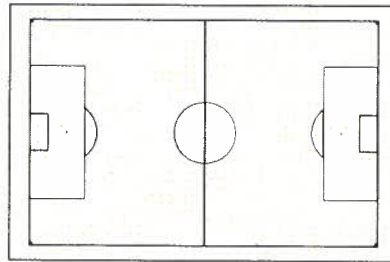
② SOCCER FIELD

③ BASEBALL FIELD

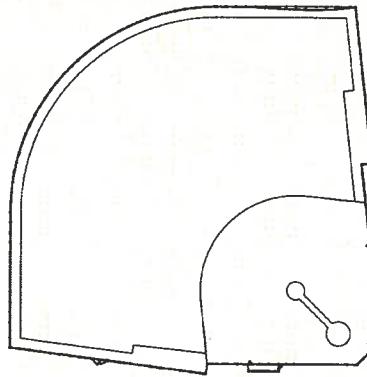
④ LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD



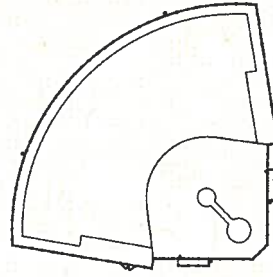
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